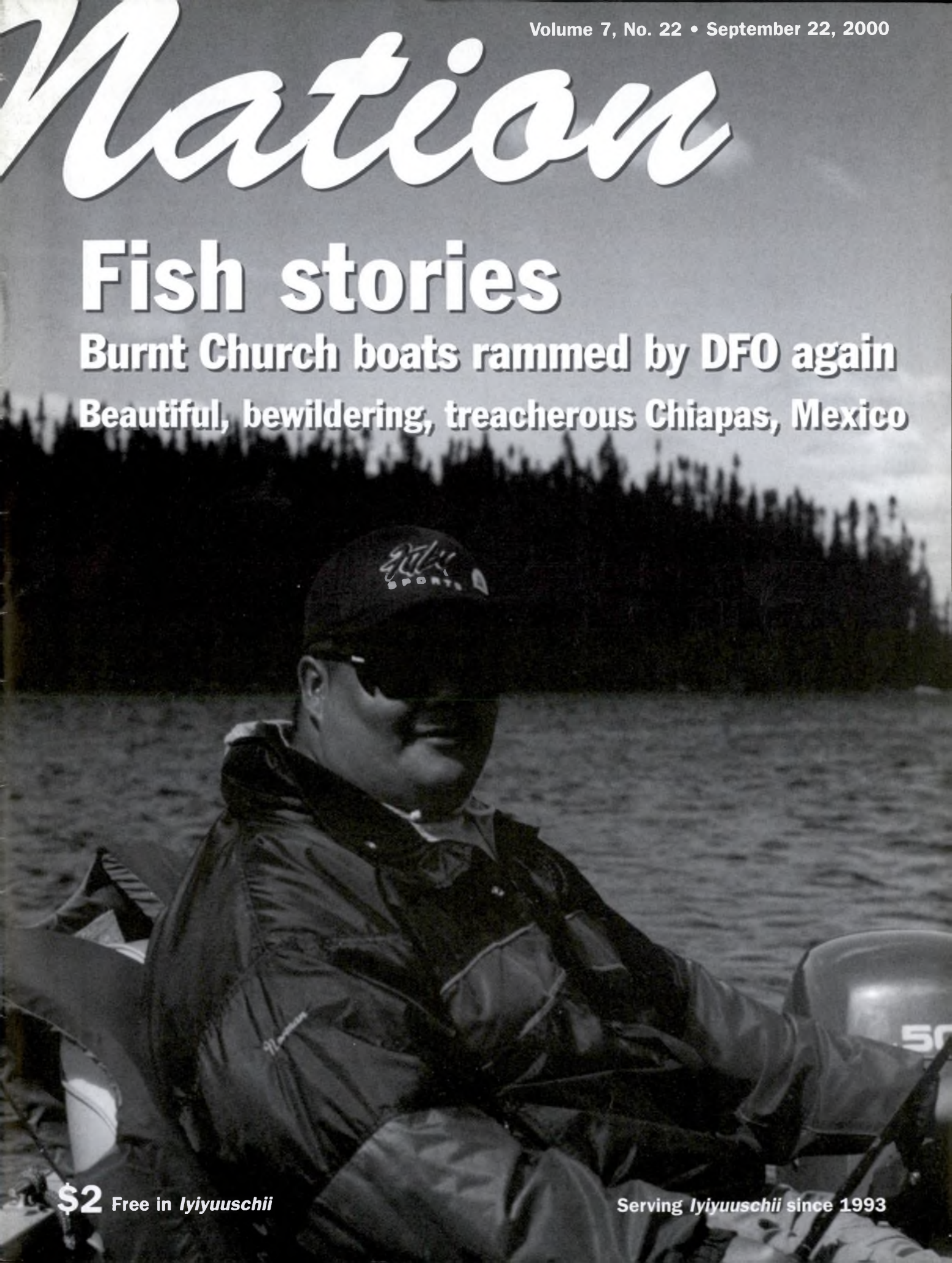
Volume 7, No. 22 • September 22, 2000

Nation

Fish stories

Burnt Church boats rammed by DFO again

Beautiful, bewildering, treacherous Chiapas, Mexico



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Availible in November 2000, the James Bay Cree Telephone book brings us closer together - making it easier to contact each other - family to family, friend to friend, department to department and business to new and old customers. Make sure you're accessible, drop us a line if you have a new phone or number or if you're a new Cree business. The listing is free!

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Just when I thought Hydro-Quebec couldn't or wouldn't do anything more to upset or annoy me, the letter came out of the blue.

A letter that started my journey into the bowels of Hydro-Quebec hell. First you enter a purgatory where you phone and phone and phone ust trying to get hold of a warm human being. After 15 minutes of trying to reach them and getting a busy tone (surely a major corporation that gives the government more than $350 million a year could afford more receptionists?), I finally hear a ring.

Halleluiah, the promised land is in reach. Wrong. This is purgatory, remember. The next 20 minutes is spent listening to how you can let Hydro-Quebec just extract the payment straight from your bank account or you can pay by automatic bank tellers. The message is given with one of those sickly sweet saccharine voices that I personally find annoying. I don't find a real person who's sweet annoying unless they're trying to sell me something I don't want to buy. To be really frank, I got the damn message after the first five minutes. Guess this is Hydro-Quebec's attempt at subliminal advertising.

I nearly fell asleep as the voiced droned on, and then there was a click. I was hopeful and groggy. Yes, it wasn't another step, I finally I get a chance to talk to a real person about the letter I had received.

It seems they were going to cut off my power unless I gave them my social insurance number. It's times like this I wish I had never applied for one in the first place. You see, I can understand giving my number to employers. I don't like it but I can see the reasoning. But to give it to Hydro-Quebec is another thing entirely.

To be able to have any business that is already a monopoly able to have access to all the data that the government may have on me is a frightening thing.

Crees have seen Hydro-Quebec in the past as the enemy. That has been changing recently. They don't seem as fearful these days, but I guess behind the mask of geniality lurks the monster we all knew was there. Not only did they invade our land but now they want into our very lives without our consent.

At this point I wouldn't consider that Hydro-Quebec is just the enemy of the Crees but is that of the Quebec population at large. The idea that they can invade the privacy of every individual in Quebec at will shows that they are not owned by all Quebecers as Hydro says.

It is no longer the company envisioned by Rene Levesque that would serve the people but has become big brother.

The question wasn't whether or not I could pay but whether or not I would allow them access to my private life. I phoned lawyer J.P. Murdock of Mainville & Associates to see what my options were.

It turns out there were none. Hydro-Quebec could turn off my power after eight days if I didn't give them what they wanted. Unfortunately I don't have a generator or I would have told them to go to hell... in a handbasket, etc, etc.

Now I have to pick up the phone for another long wait in Hydro-Quebec's purgatory waiting for someone to invade my privacy.

by William Nicholls

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ON THE COVER
Fishing on Mistissini Lake
Photographer: Will Nicholls
Cover Design: MONA LAVIOLETTE

Top ten

REZ NOTES not by Ndians

Top 10 Ways things would be different if Santa were Indian

10. At bedtime, kids would leave Cornsoup and frybread for the big guy

9. He would be wearing a red turtleneck to hide his hickeys

8. Santa's new moccasins are made out of Dasher

7. Santa has to take out a billion dollar pre-Xmas tide over loan at a bordertown bank

6. Five pound block of cheese under every tree

5. His elves would never show up for work on Friday's and sometimes Monday's

4. The sleigh would need a boost every other state

3. His outfit would consist of a red flannel ribbon shirt, with matching leggings, moccasins and beaded black belt with matching beaded rimmed hat, all to match his oversized beaded gift bag. And underneath would be a beaded thong with a small delicate plume attached to the back

2. Indian preference would require you to hire all Hopi's to fit in those teeny tiny elf outfits

1. According to Indian time, our gifts would arrive in February.

We meant to put this in at Xmas but you know Indian time

TOP TEN REASONS TO BE AMERICAN INDIAN

1. You can point with your lips and give your fingers a rest.
2. You'll never be alone because everyone is related to you.
3. You'll never starve because there is always a feast of somekind, somewhere, at any time.
4. We are the only ones who can save the rain forests with our dances.
5. You'll alway's know the first letter of the alphabet (Ayyyyy).
6. If you know how to "stomp" you'll always have a "snag".
7. Because Indians are just...somehow.
8. You can recognize the Indian Affairs dentures in Dances with Wolves.
9. You'll never need lotion when you have a greasy frybread.
10. Because "you just need one more number to cry out 'BINGO'."

If you're funny and think you can write a good Rez Notes
Then call 1-514-272-3077 and ask for Will.
Your allowed to take a pen name, nomdu plume or other alias
if you so desire

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DFO BREAKS THE PEACE

Whenever a Mi'kmaq lobster trap is seized or a Mi'kmaq boat is capsized by the federal fisheries department, the waves don't stop at the shores of Miramichi Bay.

One day after former Ontario Premier Bob Rae was appointed to mediate the violent dispute over treaty rights between the Mi'kmaq of Esgenoôpetitj (Burnt Church) and the federal government, fisheries minister Herb Dhaliwal ordered another attack on the Mi'kmaq.

Last Tuesday afternoon, DFO officers in 12 boats rammed their vessels into Mi'kmaq fishers, then pepper-sprayed them, Esgenoôpetitj spokesperson Karen Somerville said.

One Mi'kmaq boat was capsized, leaving four men struggling in the frigid water, 14 people were arrested and held in custody over night, including Chief Wilbur Dedam. Three Mi'kmaq boats were seized, Somerville added.

It was the second such assault in as many weeks.

Somerville says those arrested were detained because they refused to sign an agreement stipulating they would stop fishing and traveling on Miramichi Bay.

And even Rae said on CBC's *The National* that the aggressive tactics of the DFO surprised him.

"The minister is acting in a manner that is totally demeaning and underhanded," Dedam stated in a strongly worded press release. "The day after he publicly accepted the mediation process, he sends his officers to undermine the process and basically destroy any chance that the mediator could bring both parties to a resolution of this dispute. He never intended for the process to work."

Regardless, the Mi'kmaq are still optimistic mediation will end the violence that has plagued their community since the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of Mi'kmaq fisher Donald Marshall Jr. last September.

Traditional Chief Lloyd Augustine says his community's dispute with the federal government over treaty rights doesn't affect only the Mi'kmaq of Esgenoôpetitj.

"We're fighting for everybody's treaty rights," Augustine said.

Mohawk writer and professor Taiaiake Alfred agrees.

"[The crisis at Esgenoôpetitj] is one of these frontline struggles that will determine our future relationship with Canada," Alfred said.

"Either existing treaties and rights will be extinguished or we're going to fight and preserve them — if they [the federal government] win, it's just another victory for the idea that indigenous people are Canadians."

The Mi'kmaq of Esgenoôpetitj need money and donations in kind to continue their fight. Since the confrontations began, more than 30 Mi'kmaq men and women have been charged with a variety of offences under the Criminal Code and the Fisheries Act. The cost of defending one young man who was beaten and pepper-sprayed on Aug. 29 has been estimated at $20,000..

by Alison Blackduck

On Sept. 5, the EMFN Donation Committee was struck by the Chief and Council of Esgenoôpetitj to raise money for and accept material donations on behalf of the community.

- 60 per cent of all funds will go into the legal defense fund.
- 20 per cent will be used to pay for the enforcement services of the Esgenoôpetitj and Listuguj Rangers, many of whom are volunteering their time.
- 10 per cent will be used to buy food for the volunteers, the supporters and the rangers.
- 10 per cent will be used to buy miscellaneous supplies like paper products.

Financial donations can be made at any Royal Bank in Canada. Please make cheques payable to:

EMFN Donation Committee
The Royal Bank
Chatham, NB
Transit No. 00484-003
Account No. 1001981

The committee will issue receipts for all donations of $20 or more, provided you send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

EMFN Donation Committee,
620 Bayview Drive,
Esgenoôpetitj First Nation, NB
E9G 2A8

The Mi'kmaq of Esgenoôpetitj also need:

- Lobster traps,
- Zodiacs,
- Diving equipment (to retrieve lobster traps destroyed by DFO and non-Native fishers),
- Personal flotation devices,
- Radio communications equipment like CB radios and walkie-talkies,
- Binoculars, Night vision goggles,
- Office supplies/stationary, especially paper for faxing, photocopying and printing, and
- Food, preferably non-perishable.

Donations of the above listed items can be dropped off at the town garage in Kahnawake and the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal, 2001 Blvd. St-Laurent. A pick-up truck will be taking the donated goods from Montreal to Esgenoôpetitj on Sept 22.

For more information, please call Jeannie Bartibogue at (506) 776-1211.

A SPIRITUAL MESSAGE TO THE AMERICAS

This Message to America is the result of the National Indian Council on Aging's Year 2000 Conference in Duluth, Minnesota.

As we stand before the dawn of a new millennium, we pray for America's survival, our survival.

We pray that we will be given strength by the Creator to follow the footsteps of our forefathers to share our love, respect and compassion for one another. There is good in everyone because the Creator has put a little of Himself in all of us.

We pray for forgiveness for the pain and suffering we have caused one another.

We pray that our children will not repeat our mistakes.

We pray that we can respect the diversity of America; all life is sacred.

Every child born is a precious gift of our Creator. It is our sacred trust to embrace children from all walks of life because we are part of the same family.

We pray that children will honor and respect their elders - that is where the wisdom comes from. This respect will not allow elders to be forgotten. We are all equal, with each having our own special gift to contribute. These values allow our youth to become leaders and workers in our society.

Children, you are our future and our hope for the people. Stand and be courageous.

We pray to learn and use the wisdom of all that has come before us, to achieve personal successes and to contribute to those of others. Only when our young ones learn respect for everything can they evolve.

EARTH: We pray for respect and love of Mother Earth because she is the foundation of human survival and we must keep her pollution-free for those who will travel after us. Protect her water, air, soil, trees, forests, plants and animals. Do not just take and waste resources. Make it a priority to conserve. The land is given to us by the Creator to care for, not to own. If we take care of the land, the land will take care of us.

UNITY: We should have respect for each other. We pray for commitment and responsible behavior in order to help those in need and to give them support and friendship. Be an example in life that others may follow; serve people, community and country.

We should all strive to be leaders and contributors. Do not sit back and let others plan and do all the thinking.

Let us unite together so that we may have the strength to protect our future. Strength comes from working through trials and tribulations.

HEALTH: Spiritual health is the key to holistic health. We pray to have the discipline to set healthy examples for our children to follow. Respecting everyone and everything in the universe starts with self-respect. Take time to listen and take care of your body and spirit.

FAMILY AND YOUTH: Family is important and precious. Always let them know that they are loved. Let your children and grandchildren know you are always there to love and support them and that they mean the world to you no matter what they do or say. Children are of infinite value. Live what you teach. Spiritual values, honesty, and integrity start in the home. We pray for the youth. We must teach the youth to work together and respect all that is living on our Mother Earth. We need to convey to our younger generations that the survival of our people lies in spirituality.

PEACE: We pray to learn ways to settle differences peacefully. Teach respect for each other's ideas. Value honesty onall levels, from children to parents to community to governments. We will be happy when we create peace with each other.

To the 7th Generation • Survive • Keep hopes and dreams • Take care of yourself • Remember your spirit • Be there for each other • Respect courage • Share knowledge • Always keep learning • Remember your true values.

MISTASSINI SPECKLE TROUT BEING STUDIED

No, Mistissini doesn't have any problems with fishing yet but the community would like to see it stay that way. Usually it's the government's responsibility to do studies on fish and fauna but Mistissini First Nation got tired of waiting for government budget increases and took on the responsibility themselves. The government told Mistissini that when it comes to conservation plans they put their budget where there's a crisis. "Our argument was that it would be good to find out what makes an area good so you can know what to do to keep it that way," said Prince.

Speckled trout DNA was collected this summer and fall for the first part of the fish study. The beautiful thing about a DNA study is that DNA doesn't change for about a million years, said Prince. Other sports fish like lake trout, pike and walleye will be studied in later phases. The results will be an essential tool in developing a management plan for the Mistassini Lake.

Micheal Price, of Mistissini's economic development department, is quite excited about the project. "There are three important considerations in Mistassini Lake when you consider fishing," he said. To begin with, there are the Native fishers who depended on the fish for subsistence, then there are the tourists, Cree outfitters and the fishers from the Mistissini preserve. Prince says the community didn't want to wait until there was a problem before trying to fix it. "We want to keep the lake the way it is," he said, adding that the study might help others trying to revitalize a lake somewhere else.

The route to that was to get everyone involved as funds were limited. Guides and Cree outfitters would take samples of the Speckle trouts fin and mark where on Mistissini Lake the sample was taken from. The fish would then be released.

Cree guides and trappers told where the spawning beds were so that in the fall samples could be taken there. Speckle trout always return to the same spawning beds. This information would be used to determine migration patterns of the speckle trout in Mistassini Lake. It can also tell the average size of the fish spawning and how healthy it is. "With all of this information you can create a more detailed management plan," says Prince. "When the studies are done we can send it to the government and say look we've studied this and we propose we manage the lake this way."

Helping to create that plan is Dylan Fraser, a Laval University Master's candidate under the supervision of Dr. Louis Bernarchez, the world's acknowledge expert in fish DNA studies. Renè Dion, a biologist with the CRA, is contributing his expertise. Prince is glad to see all the different people and entities involved in the work. "This is a community-based study that combines traditional knowledge with western knowledge," Prince said. He said the scientific study itself will be free from any outside influences except for the researchers.

Prince said the current management method treats the lake as if it was a one big pool and to estimate how many fish it should have. "It isn't specific," said Prince. "Say they say there are only 500 available, well then they'll close the lake to speckle when that limit is reached except for subsistence fishing. That's the way it's estimated and we hope to change that."

Prince said the community is hoping to prove itself with the study. "We'll be looking for more partners for next years study and we think the government will contribute more once they see we're serious," Prince said.

by William Nicholls

Church Bankruptcy?

The Caribou Anglican diocese in British Columbia may become the first church in Canada ever to declare bankruptcy. The diocese will find out during meetings Oct. 13-15 when the church will vote on it. Archbishop David Crawly blames the Canadian government for dragging the church into residential school lawsuits. Only one of the lawsuits named the church but the federal government cross-sued.

Crawley asked the government to limit the churches' liability so that all parties could get on with healing and reconciliation with First Nations peoples.

The Anglican church, along with the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and United Churches apologized Sept. 6, saying, "we are sorry for 500 years of suffering." This is not the first time the churches have apologized but it is the first time they have done so together. The churches said they were apologizing for wrongs both in the recent and distant past. The federal and provincial governments chose not to attend.

Some First Nations peoples said the apology isn't accepted as far as they are concerned.

Floyd Mowatt, the Gitskan Native who recently won a undisclosed out-of-court settlement from the Caribou diocese and the federal government, said he couldn't care less if the diocese or the entire Anglican church went bankrupt.

The larger church is facing problems even though the church has maintained that all dioceses are run as separate legal and corporate entities. The churches national office in Toronto has laid off eight employees and cut $500,000 from its budget in order to fund the cost of fighting residential-school lawsuits.

In Caribou, they are arguing that the church buildings are held in trust for the parishes and shouldn't be seized. But the future remains uncertain for the churches.

The Anglican church ran about 20 of Canada's residential schools. The Catholic church ran most of the rest. Other Canadian church bodies facing possible bankruptcy as a result of lawsuits include the Anglican diocese of Qu'Appelle in Saskatchewan, the Catholic diocese of Whitehorse and three Western branches of the Oblate order.

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Briefs_

continued from page 7

Rickey Petawabino Jailed

Rickey Petawabino defended himself without the aid of a lawyer in Mistissini during the September court session. Petawabino had been charged with a number of drug-related offenses but was appearing to defend himself on the marijuana charges only. After spending 10 months in preventive custody, Petawabino learned he would be spending at least another eight months in jail. He is also looking at two more court appearances. One will be in Chibougamau on another drug-related offense. His second will be in Chisasibi to answer cocaine-trafficking charges. Petawabino chose to be tried by judge and jury. It is expected that this case will be a lengthy one.

Andrew Alex Blacksmith was sentenced to four months after a firearms-related incident in May. Blacksmith carried around a gun and is alleged to have pointed it at people. The Crown prosecutors have said that they plan to push for imprisonment for any present or future firearms-related incidents.

Kokomville update

Harry Wawatie, customary chief of the Barriere Lake Algonquins, says the blocking of the road by an Algonquin family has caused economic hardship for forestry workers and urged a quick settlement by all parties concerned. Wawatie said that the Barriere Lake community is looking for a peaceful and respectful co-existence. Wawatie said that his community has already signed a trilateral agreement with the government and forestry industry that they are happy with. Wawatie admitted that Jacob Wawatie and his family rejected the agreement but said that they represented a "very small number" of the members of Barriere Lake First Nation. Domtar, rumoured to be eager to resume cutting operations did agree to postpone resumption of its forestry operations in the Gull Lake sector until after a meeting Sept. 6.

Chiiwetin Gas Station owners Clifford and Eric Benac with employees.

B.C. Blockade

About 80 natives blocked a CP Rail line near Chase, B.C. to show support for the Burnt Church band of Mi'kmaq natives. Members of the Interior Alliance were protesting against the recent arrest of 14 Mi'kmaq natives for fishing in waters off New Brunswick. They say the Mi'kmaq have a legitimate treaty right to fish and feed their families. One Alliance member, Richard Manual, says he placed his own fishing boat across the train tracks to show his support. "When the federal government does utilize heavy handed tactics to suppress and try to deal with sensitive issues, the Interior Alliance will respond," says Manual. CP Rail was notified about the blockade in advance. The blockade caused "significant disruption," Ian LaCouvee of the CPR said.

Boycott Lobster

Nova Scotia fishermen admit they're nervous about a native threat to organize a lobster boycott. The Indian Brook First Nation say they're going to ask Native casinos to boycott lobster caught by non-natives in the area. Indian Brook is one of the other bands that didn't sign a deal with the DFO. Indian Brook say they are considering the boycott since non-native fishermen are boycotting the starting up of a native fishery in St. Mary's Bay. Atlantic Fishing Industry Alliance spokesperson Denny Morrow calls the lobster boycott a irresponsible move. Morrow said it could hurt commercial fishermen and the Atlantic lobster industry.

Frank Thomas, a band member at Indian Brook, says the boycott could continue throughout the winter fishery but would stop once the DFO stopped seizing traps.

Land donated to Delaware Tribe

The stories are endless of land being taken from Native peoples but you rarely hear of it being given back. Peter Galantino, 78, gave 11.5 acres to the Delaware Tribe of Western Oklahoma. The land is located about 40 miles west of Philadelphia and used to belong to the tribe until the 1800's when they were forced to leave the area. One of the reasons the land was donated back was the discovery of arrowheads on the property leading Galantino to say "This is their land. We just gave back what was already theirs." The arrowheads were also given to the Delaware tribe.

Tribal secretary Linda Poolaw said the farmland was the first donation they had ever received from an Eastern landowner. Poolaw said the tribe would call the land "the Galantino gift" and use it as a burial ground. Poolaw said she and other tribe members were moved by the gift.

CHIAPAS AND the politics of coffee

On the drying patio, co-author, Monika Firl poses with members of one coffee-growing family in the highlands region of El Bosque.

Beautiful, bewildering, treacherous Chiapas. A land where indigenous hopes have been rekindled. A land where indigenous blood-letting has been the official response ever since.

by Monika Maria Firl and Oscar Hernández

Photos : Monika Maria Firl

With the Zapatista uprising of January 1, 1994, indigenous people in the Mexican state of Chiapas took a historic stand against the centuries of repression that their people, the original inhabitants of this region, have suffered. That cold dawn became a landmark event when thousands of Indigenous insurgents armed predominantly with simple rifles, wooden sticks and their profound roots of human dignity and their beliefs in what is just stood up and said, "Ya Basta!" "Enough is Enough!"

But rather than answer the people's cry for respect of their rights and real development in the communities, Mexican national authorities appear to believe that social and cultural problems can be resolved by simply applying more force. And despite the excruciatingly long process of negotiating peace between the Mexican government and the Zapatista rebel forces, the recognition of indigenous rights to autonomy in Mexico appears to be as far away as it has ever been. Indigenous people in Mexico make up some 10 percent of the total population. But in states like Chiapas, in the southeastern corner of Mexico, that number jumps to approximately 50 percent, comprising the majority of Mexico's Tseltal, Tzotzil, Chol, Zoque and Tojolabal Mayan speakers. The indigenous municipalities are located primarily in the highlands and jungle regions of the state and are characterized by an overall lack of basic health care, education, minimal sanitary conditions, clean water, electricity and basic respect for human rights. Like so

many indigenous regions in the world, the misery of Mexico's indigenous population had been previously hidden from the public attention. But these basic indicators reveal the painful problems:

- Illiteracy rate – 50 percent
- Inhabitants without drainage or sewage systems – 85 percent
- Inhabitants without electricity – 75 percent
- Inhabitants without access to potable water – 50 percent
- Inhabitants living in homes with dirt floors – 90 percent

On the road to San Andres

The San Andres Peace Accords -- negotiated since May 1995 until the signing of the first of the accords in February 1996 -- were designed as an attempt to reconcile the injustice and exploitation that indigenous communities in Chiapas and Mexico have endured for centuries. The Mexican government accepted these talks as "necessary" after the Zapatista uprising drew international attention to the need for democracy, justice and respect for human dignity in this long-forgotten corner of Mexico.

However, the political road to implementing the San Andres Accords has been plagued with unnecessary obstacles and was mined from the start with the duplicitous intentions of the government negotiating team. Today, four years after the signing of the peace accords, none of the agreements have been respected. Instead, "rebellious regions" in Chiapas are surrounded by military camps, infiltrated by paramilitary forces and filled with a sense of insecurity and division.

In the face of this, autonomous indigenous groups in Chiapas struggle for the construction of a "New Mexico" – a Mexico based upon justice and a respect for cultural differences.

Just as the political road to San Andres has become unnecessarily blocked, so has the physical road. An unsettling game of cat and mouse with government patrols awaits travelers.

A winding thread of asphalt takes us from the "safe" tourist hamlet of San Cristobal de Las Casas, past San Andres Larrainzar to the region of El Bosque. Around every corner a surprise awaits: sporadically located landslides; gaping holes where torrential rains cause entire chunks of road to simply disappear; and the now-common strategically placed immigration and military check-points to control the movement of Mexican citizens and foreign nationals alike.

In order to avoid repeated harassment and the possibility of interrogation and detention, travelers either embark upon this road during the wee dawn hours, or take the cumbersome detours, far from the "not-officially-declared conflict zone" of San Andres. One way or another, you do finally end up in the lush, productive, high-altitude coffee-growing region of El Bosque, populated by indigenous campesino (small-scale) farmers.

Once in the region, we were able to meet and discuss questions of local development with the recently formed coffee-grower's Cooperative Mut Vitz ("Bird Mountain" in Tzotzil).

"All we have is our land"

We were in El Bosque to attend a meeting of Mut Vitz members with progressive coffee roasters, North American importers and alternative credit bank representatives. They had gathered in southern Mexico to discuss how business relations could help them form a cooperative that would respect local traditions and human rights. It was an opportunity to get to know each other and to understand each other's needs with perspectives from "both worlds."

"I am very happy to see that you have come to learn about how we are working and see how we are organizing around organic coffee," said Manuel Hernandez, one community promoter. "As you know, for a campesino coffee farmer, all that we have to support ourselves and our families is our land."

But organic coffee is an arduous and unforgiving crop. The coffee plant takes three years of backbreaking work before it will yield a single berry. The organic producer must construct individual terraces or plant-living barriers on the contour of the slope in order to prevent soil erosion. Pests must be painstakingly controlled, generally by manual practices like spraying mixtures of natural

repellents or by simply hand-eliminating infested berries and trimming the affected branches. Shade trees must be strategically planted and trimmed to maintain a consistent, filtered sunlight. And all natural wastes are meticulously combined into the on-site compost heaps that are used to produce natural fertilizers.

During the harvest season, the work only intensifies. A campesino coffee farmer is up before dawn in order to take advantage of all possible daylight working hours. But first, he and his family must walk several hours just to get to his little parcel of coffee plants. They must carry baskets and bags and enough pozol (a thick corn drink) to get them through the workday until evening falls.

The picking of coffee is something that must be done at precisely the right time. The farmers must work quickly once the berries have ripened to a crimson red. Otherwise, the quality -- and therefore the price -- of their product suffers dramatically.

But despite the tender care and human energy that goes into producing coffee, campesino farmers historically have seen little profit from their coffee crop. More often than not, coffee results in being yet another mechanism for exploitation.

"Something that is very typical when we go to sell our coffee to the local middlemen -- or coyotes as we call them here -- is that they don't weigh the coffee properly. Or they might tell us that the coffee is still wet, even though we know it has been properly dried, and they lower the price," explains Lucio Gonzalez, the current president of the Mut Vitz coffee-growing cooperative's board of directors.

"Or the coyotes will simply offer us any price they like, since we have already carried our coffee to the point of sale. It is unlikely that a coffee producer will carry his coffee back home. Of course, the coyotes know that too, so essentially they can just offer any price and say, 'Take it or leave it.' So we end up not earning enough to buy a simple depulping machine or other basic equipment we need to improve the quality of our production, much less the quality of life in our communities," said Gonzalez.

The 1994 Zapatista armed uprising in Chipas, Mexico awakened world consciousness to the plight of Mexico's Indigenous population.

Selling through progressive coffee roasters and importers who are interested in supporting indigenous peoples through their business channels is one way that Mut Vitz is looking to escape from the ages-old economic traps of their region.

"I think you know that when we sell our coffee we receive a very low price. But in contrast, everything that we have to buy is very

Promotion of fair Trade Coffee

Bob Thomson
Fair TradeMark Canada
(TransFair Canada)
323 Chapel St., 2nd floor, Ottawa,
Ontario K1N 7Z2
Tel. (613) 563-3351 Fax (613) 237-5969
Toll free: 1-888-663-FAIR
Email: fairtrade@cyberus.ca

Isabelle St. Germain
Equiterre - Un juste cafe - A just coffee
2177, rue Masson, Suite 317, Montreal
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Tel. (514) 522-2000 Fax (514) 522-1227
eqtcafe@cam.org
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Linda Burnside/Kevin Walters
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333 Roncesvalles Avenue, Toronto,
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expensive. And so our earnings often do not even cover our basic needs," says Juan Perez, another community promoter.

"Here in Chiapas there are many, many needs," explains Diego Nuñez, in-coming member of the Mut Vitz board of directors. "But through this kind of coordination we hope that we will be able to sell our coffee to people like you, who offer a fair price for our product. As coffee producers and members of Mut Vitz, we have to say that enough is enough! "We hope that through this kind of work, we can escape the very traditional exploitation under which we have historically suffered," said Nuñez.

The Mut Vitz co-op is a shining example of the degree of local initiative and organizational capacity that popular organizations can marshal. Despite many obstacles, Mut Vitz has moved forward quickly in production capacity, quality control, conversion to certifiable organic practices and expanding markets.

During the coffee harvest the entire family works from dawn to dusk.

Because of the lack of government interest for true development in this zone, producers here have been searching for independent economic and social alternatives to support positive change in their communities. One critical aspect in the creation of alternative models that are supportive of democracy, self-management and sustainability is the sale of their coffee at "fair trade" prices.

There are currently some 1,000 producers associated with Mut Vitz. They expect to produce more than 1.5 million pounds of high-altitude coffee this year.

During our brief visit, we could sense the pride these farmers have placed in their proposals. Bill Harris is the coordinator of Cooperative Coffees, a fair-trade coffee importer based in Americus, Georgia.

He sells "fair trade coffee" in Canadian and U.S. markets and came on the delegation to learn more about the realities and alternatives facing small-scale coffee farmers in Mexico.

"I've told many (people) since returning from Mexico that this was a very moving and inspirational trip for me," said Harris. "I've visited many cooperatives during the last three years, but I've never seen the spirit and determination I felt in that simple room on the hill. Mut Vitz is indeed what this fair-trade movement is all about. This has really answered questions that were lurking in my mind concerning our work. I needed a good dose of justification and I got it!"

International fair-trade initiatives recognize the work that campesino coffee farmers invest in their fields in order to produce high-quality coffee, while applying ecologically sustainable practices. Fair trade looks to change structures or international-trading "norms" in order to improve the economic and social conditions under which the small-scale producer works and lives.

For example, fair trade offers direct access to international markets and seeks to improve the actual terms of trade for the campesino farmer by elevating the purchase price for coffee – irrespective of the going international market price. It also attempts to facilitate credit to democratically organized campesino farmer cooperatives that otherwise have little to no access to working capital. These kinds of practices are young experiments at leveling the playing field of international trade, but appear to be gaining ground.

But despite international interest in this kind of experience, locally the cooperative is at constant risk. Mexico is not accustomed to such independent development and the local reactions show it.

Talks in San Andres Larrainzar were safeguarded by local, national and international observers.

The political climate in coffee country

The official government party, the Institutionalized Revolutionary Party (or PRI for its initials in Spanish) has been in power for 70 years, making it one of the longest running one-party systems in modern history. During that time it has become a master at "the Carrot or the Stick" diplomacy. In a country where Tierra y Libertad, "Land and Liberty," was the battle cry for a decade-long

revolution at the beginning of the 20th century, nothing scares the PRI now more than a truly independent campesino organization. Octavio Paz, Mexico's Nobel laureate poet, once called the Mexican government a philanthropic ogre. Independent organizations are bought, co-opted or repressed. Campesino leaders who are not willing to play by the PRI's rules are likely to be imprisoned or killed.

A key part in the government's co-option strategy is the pro-government National Campesino Confederation (CNC) and the Indigenous National Institute (INI). Credits for farming and other resources are channeled through structures such as these in order to keep the lid on local initiatives. These agencies offer generous credits to obedient organizations and withhold support from the unruly.

Chilon is just one illustrative example of a long list of violent acts during the PRI reign of power. It demonstrated a tendency that has only increased in Chiapas since the Zapatista uprising in 1994. The overriding result has been an enormous void of credibility for the government and an additional cause for mistrust of government proposals amongst popular organizations seeking democratic development in Mexico.

In the region where Mut Vitz operates, the desire for independent development has not gone without its list of frightening tales.

In March 1997, approximately one year after the signing of the San Andres Peace Accords, the Public Security Police entered San Pedro Nixtalucum, a small community of the Autonomous Region of El Bosque and one of the 28 communities that make up the Mut Vitz co-op.

Rebel leaders coordinated the three-day meeting for a new democratic society in Mexico.

And when the government finds itself unable to control unrest, tactics become increasingly heavy-handed. For example, during a series of campesino land takeovers in Chiapas in 1980, the state's governor (with apparent federal government approval) did not hesitate to have the army open fire on the community of Golonchan, in the municipality of Chilon. In that incident, 15 campesinos were killed and 22 were injured.

As police attempted to arrest several residents, members of the community protested and the police opened fire, killing four people. Twenty-seven people were arrested and hundreds of people were displaced from their community for several months.

And then, in June 1998, the Mexican military along with Public Security Police openly attacked several Zapatista-supporting communities in El Bosque for the first time since the

San Andres Peace Accords

The first signed agreements within the framework of the San Andres Peace Accords offered the following rights to the indigenous peoples in the state of Chiapas:

1. Recognition of the Aboriginal peoples in the Mexican Constitution, including their right to self-determination within the constitutional framework of autonomy.
2. Broader political representation and participation and the recognition of their economic, political and social rights.
3. A guarantee of full access to justice; access to the official legal system and recognition of indigenous legal systems.
4. Promotion of the cultural manifestations of Aboriginal peoples.
5. Promotion of their education and training, respecting and building upon traditional knowledge.
6. Increased production and employment opportunities.

1994 insurrection began. A battle ensued, and after hours of shooting eight campesinos and two policemen were dead.

Killings in the region have returned again this year, only now with a considerably more ambiguous face – as ambushes disguised to look like robbery attempts. The most recent incident occurred this last February 1.

That day several members of the Mut Vitz co-op from the community of Chavejaval were ambushed and robbed while transporting their coffee. Three of them were killed.

Common crime or political assassination? That is a difficult question to answer in the midst of a low-intensity battlefield. It is true that there now exists enormous economical pressure in the communities. With the militarization of the state, there is an accompanying increase of violence. However, this makes for the fifth death in the first months of the year and cooperative members question the coincidence that all the victims should come from their community. They sense a systematic repression against people who seek local development independent of government control.

Such is the reality behind a cup of coffee in times of war. But nevertheless, Mut Vitz producers are conscious of the need to continue the path they have chosen and consolidate their organization.

Strides forward

"The problem is that we have lost faith in government solutions. That means we reject money from any of their so-called assistance or development programs," Lucio explains. "So the producers work without any access to credits. They are simply working with their own force and the sweat of their brows. We are attempting to build our own independent support fund for the producers by virtue of our sales."

Coffee is one of the few sources of cash income for campesinos. They use this income to buy what they cannot produce -- medicines, tools and building materials.

After the seed is separated from the berry, the seeds are then fermented, washed again, and dried on cement patios.

Nevertheless, the majority of campesino coffee harvests are committed to the "coyotes" long before the berries are ever picked from the trees.

Because coffee is an annual crop, most producers go through the majority of the year without additional income. By the time the harvest months come along, the producers are already in debt to the local coyote, or simply need cash to pay the temporary help necessary to help get the harvest in quickly before the berries become over-ripened and dry on the bush. So rather than earning money from the harvest, many end up simply being able to cover their prior debts and production expenses. As one promoter says, "We work just so the middleman can eat a little bit better."

Despite these obstacles, Mut Vitz has made great strides forward. The cooperative has recently acquired its export license. The producers have been learning alternative organic production practices for the past three years to improve the quality and quantity of coffee their trees can produce. They are well into the transition from "natural" to "certifiable organic" production, paying particular attention to all appropriate practices for sustainable shade-grown coffee.

"We have seen the difference between continuing along the same path that we in this region have always followed, and the possibilities of creating real change," explains Lucio. "Change is always difficult. But continuing with the coyotes, for example, is simply repeating history.

"Essentially, we only end up with a little bit of cash in order to get us through the next months following the harvest, and then we begin the same cycle of borrowing and debts again. With independent organization and direct export, we are really putting ourselves to the test, but we also have seen concrete benefits in doing so. We are experimenting with something new and something that we are controlling according to our own criteria."

Produced with the support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Reporting to Eeyou/Eenou Youth...

You spoke, we listened...now, WE ACT!

In 1998 and 1999, representatives from the Cree Nation Youth Council (CNYC) travelled to all Cree communities, Senneterre and Washsa Sibi. We went to listen and consult with the Youth. We came to take direction.

What did the Cree Youth say?

Cree Youth had a realistic understanding of the current situation, and the prospects for their future. They had very strong ideas about what they wanted to do, and what was possible! Here is what they said.

We want a better future! We do not accept our current quality of life, either for ourselves or the future of the Cree.

We are caught in a bigger problem: we know we are the product of larger, complex processes that involved those who came before us. We know we can't solve this alone.

We are trying to bridge two worlds: we are part of a long, capable and noble Eeyou/Eenou tradition. We are also part of a larger world. There are times we feel these two worlds do not fit well together. At the same time, we find ourselves wanting the best from both worlds. There is no easy solution.

We want a say in our future! Those who make many of the decisions that affect us most often do not listen to us, or don't take us seriously. This includes everyone from the CRA to the CNYC and our local Band and Youth Councils.

We want to be heard! We know who we are, what our concerns are, and we believe we have some solutions. We at least want an opportunity to try, and to learn from our efforts.

We will not wait! Our situation gets worse each passing day. We want to start now, to build our better future.

We can make a difference! We may not have all the answers, but we know that any solution must involve us. We must be part of the solution!

We need to work together, with others, for everyone! We need to cooperate, and share and focus our limited resources.

What have we done? "The CNYC Working Agenda"

The Board of the CNYC took the feedback from the Youth, discussed it, proposed a Vision and priorities. We consulted again, and then established a Working Agenda. It includes our Vision, sets our objectives, and has specific planned actions to achieve these. Here is a summary.

1. **We are Eeyou/Eenou, and proud of it!**

We developed specific actions to strengthen the knowledge and practice of our language and culture - our identity. We will ask for the full guidance and involvement of the Elders. We also plan to seek accreditation to recognize the learning we will acquire.

2. **We want to be heard, and to take responsibility!**

We have initiated the development of CNYC sponsored training programs designed to improve our leadership and organizational skills, at the local level. We plan to have successful participants receive accreditation.

3. **Strengthen the well being of our families.**

In partnership with other community organizations, we will improve communications and support within the family, and foster family activities within the community. Youth are also seeking the involvement in better solutions to our chronic housing problems.

4. **A healthy life, free of substance abuse and dependence.**

We will work with others at the local level to assure that there are safe places for Youth to go, and places for troubled Youth to seek help, 24 hours a day. We will work to upgrade the current approaches for dealing with dependence. And we will make a major effort to bring in constructive and fun activities, year round, in our communities.

5.

Jobs and a fair chance to work.

There are not enough jobs, and even when there are, recruitment is often not fair, not based on merit. We are told that education will lead to better jobs, and we see that this is not really the way it is. So, we will work with all Cree organizations to put in place fair and effective hiring procedures. And, we are seeking much better planning so that Cree Youth who are in post secondary training or education can already know what types of jobs will be becoming available when they graduate.

6.

Education and training.

We have already initiated contacts with the Cree School Board (CSB). The Youth have asked for the same types of improvements as those proposed in the Mianscum Report:

- Standards that enable Cree Youth to succeed in high school and beyond, at home or down South;
- More involvement and genuine support from parents and community;
- Recognition for higher education and training in hiring personnel;
- More community based vocational and technical training;
- More Cree history in our curriculum, at all levels.

Success only comes by working together...

Experience has taught us that we need to work together. The major effort must still take place with each individual, at the local level. Youth Councils will be strengthened and supported. The CNYC and the Director - Youth Development will work to establish working partnerships and joint work plans with other capable organizations, including the Cree School Board, the Cree Health Board, the Human Resource Department, and CRA and local Band Councils.

The needs and aspirations of Youth are not new...

...our determination to act and succeed are!

Doo daa dow!

The Grand Council of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee on September 12th Expressed Support for the Struggle of the People of Burnt Church

The First Nations people in Canada hunt, fish and trap as part of their historic and international right to the resources on their lands and in their waters. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states in article 2 that:

"All peoples, may for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources...In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence"

The cause of the People of Burnt Church is of importance to all aboriginal peoples. In addition to these fundamental international rights, the treaties signed by the Crown recognize our rights to exploit the resources on our traditional lands and waters. These rights are recognized in the Canadian Constitution and they pre-date the treaties and indeed the Constitution of Canada. They are rights that are of primary importance to our continuation as peoples.

The lobster fishing of the people of Burnt Church and indeed of all of the aboriginal communities in the Maritimes does not threaten the conservation of the stock and is insignificant in size when compared to the non-aboriginal commercial lobster fishery. At the present time the fishery of the aboriginal peoples of the Maritimes is also insufficient to guarantee them a participation in this fishery, which is equitable when compared to the non-aboriginal take of lobsters.

The Grand Council therefore supports a resolution to this dispute, which respects the fundamental rights of the Burnt Church People and provides them and other aboriginal peoples in the Maritimes an equitable access to the fishery that fully reflects their rights and allows their communities to prosper.

Grand Chief, Ted Moses
Deputy Grand Chief Matthew Mukash
Whapmagoostui Chief David Masty
Chisasibi Chief Violet Pachanos
Wemindji Chief Reggie Mark
Eastmain Chief Edward Gilpin
Waskaganish Chief Robert Weistche
Nemaska Chief George Wapachee
Waswanipi Chief Paul Gull
Oujé Bougoumou Chief Sam Bosum
Mistissini Chief Kenny Loon

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GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EEYOU ASTCHEE)
GRAND CONSEIL DES CRIS (EEYOU ASTCHEE)

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CREE REGIONAL AUTHORITY
ADMINISTRATION RÉGIONALE CRIE

Using the Internet

by Xavier Kataquapit

Well, I finally got hooked up to the World Wide Web, or the internet. The experience has been incredible and although I am happy to be plugged in and on-line there are pros and cons to this technology. I notice that much more of my life is centered around the computer and that isn't really a very welcome thing considering the huge amount of time I already spend in working as a writer facing a computer screen.

It took a little getting used to when I first went on-line. I had to learn a few of the basics in working with some new software and in figuring out how I could use this technology rather than have it use me. In terms of positive things about the internet I believe the best service has to do with research. Through the internet I have a vast database of knowledge and information about any subject or issue from anywhere in the world. It really is great to have such a link to information at my fingertips. For instance, not long ago I was writing a piece on the flu and I needed some background. I turned to the internet for my research and I all I had to do was type the word 'flu' in the search area and tons of information opened up to me. This was very helpful and provided me with information that I would have had a lot of difficulty finding without the internet.

You can find just about anything on the internet. Recently a friend of mine was looking for a rare book. I did a simple search requesting book publishing and book directories and in no time I found the book, title and author and, get this, I was even given the opportunity to purchase it right on-line. By the way I found an interesting First Nation website called Keewaytinook Okimakanik which contains information on Northern First Nation communities, organizations and the arts. I also downloaded Cree syllabic fonts for my word processing software so that I can write in my Cree language. You can reach this site at: www.knet.on.ca

I still find it mind boggling to know that I can access information on history, geography, science, travel and I can even find people or companies on the internet. Although I haven't really ordered or purchased anything over the internet yet, I am sure it is just a matter of time before I am confident enough to do so. I also believe that many of the purchases that we make at stores, we will do over the internet in the very near future.

Communications is another huge area that benefits me as a writer. Now that I am on-line I can communicate with those that publish my work and I can do it faster, more efficiently and cheaper with e-mail. Recently, I purchased a scanner which allows me to send photos to various publications and that saves me a lot of time and money and as well is a benefit to publishers. I also find that e-mail promises to be a great way to stay in touch with family and friends and I plan to use it more and more for this purpose. However, I recently discovered something called ICQ which allows one to communicate with other people who have ICQ in real time over the internet. I had problems with the software I downloaded but in hindsight I am just as happy. After asking around, most people who have experienced ICQ tell me it is intrusive to their privacy and although it may be a good way for some to communicate it doesn't appeal to me. I spend most of my day at a computer so I don't really look forward to sitting in front of a computer screen for long periods chatting with people in my free time. To do so I still prefer the telephone for this purpose.

The negative thing about the internet is that I seem to be spending more and more time in front of the computer monitor. I also wonder at how the internet is going to develop in terms of affecting my privacy. Will we end up living in a world that science fiction writers warned us about with big brother monitoring our communication and the corporate world using the internet to manipulate our lives? Will much of our daily living revolve around this huge electronic brain called the internet? Will we become the users and rulers of this technology or will we end up serving it? Only time will tell.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is seeking an exceptional and highly motivated leader who can assess the First Nation and Non-First Nation political landscape at the community, provincial, national and international levels. The candidate will have demonstrated sound judgment and can prioritize emerging issues that enable the CEO to develop clear and coherent strategies for multi-dimensional issues affecting the AFN. When dealing with AFN issues the candidate requires the competence to assess the organization's internal resource requirements and the ability to recognize if outside expertise is necessary. A thorough understanding of access to funding from the private sector and different levels of government is required. The talent to mobilize the organization, implement the strategies and evaluate its effectiveness are key in this role.

Reporting to, and working closely with the National Chief and the AFN's Executive Committee, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will develop and bring forward strategies for approval. The candidate will take direction and report on their actions to the National Chief and the Executive Committee. It is important that the candidate have a clear understanding of both their political and administrative roles.

The successful candidate's credentials will include solid academic training or equivalent experience in the area of public policy combined with a track record of successful management. The candidate will have demonstrated past success in the areas of strategic planning, financial and human resources management. The candidate's past work experience will be diverse and political in nature. This position demands diplomacy and excellence in: work standards, articulate communication, the ability to execute projects and evaluate results.

The ability to speak a First Nation's language and French would be a definite asset. The appointed leader's skill set will include keen negotiating skills and the ability to act in liaison with the Executive Committee in the promotion and marketing of the AFN at all levels. A remuneration package commensurate with the senior nature of this position is offered.

If you are proactive, able to work with continuous change and qualified, please forward a complete, confidential résumé in support of your candidacy for this executive opportunity located in Ottawa by the October 20, 2000 to:

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51 Falconer Bay
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2M 4R6

Telephone: (204) 257-9929
Fax: (204) 257-9707
Email: bhiggins@total.net

HIGGINS INTERNATIONAL INC.

Troubled Times

When I just a lad at school
and ran errands for dimes
The speakers in a general rule
Referred to troubled times.
"The world is sad to look upon,"
They sorrowfully said.
"When from the school room you have gone
Rough roads you'll have to tread."

From time to time a visitor came
Whose voice the message boomed,
"Upon mankind must lie the blame;
The world today is doomed."
But prophets of dimay and fear
Proved often to be wrong,
I trod the rough roads year by year
And somehow got along

I know the score of greed and hate
The world's best men have had
And still in spite of blunder great
There's more of good than bad.
Grave dangers seen and unforeseen
Have been the lot of man,
And troubled time have always been
Since the world began.

The above was written by Gorden Moore and is part of a book entitled Poems of James Bay. Moore was born on September 17, 1908 and went to school in Moose Factory. He taught himself to read and write brailee after a operation left him partially blind. He started to write poetry in the 1950's and died at the age of 62.

TONTO NO MORE

by John Potter

Well, Whatever. Rude remarks will no longer foster Tonto comple.

I'm selling my body. If they price NDN bodies like NDN cars you still won't be able to pay your way into a toilet!

I'm too broke to afford eBay, or to afford an ad in the paper, so I'm advertising here.

For sale, one used body, cheap. It could use a tune-up, has a few nicks and dings, somewhat high mileage, but runs fairly good. It's durable, sturdy and dependable as long as you run it on premium fuel. Some hail damage toward rear. Best offer.

Why am I selling the old clunker? Because I'm sick and tired of constantly being judged by it. I'm sick of "friends" offering their rude and insensitive remarks. I'm sick of people and their totally appearance-based assessments.

And I'm sick of being their Tonto.

I just want to be a piece of cosmic fluff; mere spirit, light, character and intellect floating here and there, with no physical person for people to judge, inspect and insult.

People say and do the darnedest things.

A man I know walks up to me and jabs me in the gut with his index finger and says, "Man! You're sure puttin' on the pounds!"

Mind you, this guy could stand to miss a few snacks himself, and, he wants me to donate artwork for his charity. Does he think he's scoring sunshine points with his comments? And besides, two of me could fit inside him! I wanted to say, "Yes I have put on some lard, but there's a thin person inside me, yearning to come out and beat the living snot outta you."

Being a civil person with low self-esteem, I passed off his remarks with a joke and changed the subject. I was his Tonto.

Often times, stupid remarks are racially motivated. Last week I mentioned to a gentleman that I was on my way to offer a Native American blessing over a couple of friends at their wedding. He said, "What are you going to use, a tomahawk?" I was so stunned by this, I couldn't even reply. Tonto again.

Someone else recently noticed my thinning pate and said, "Wow, it's gettin' pretty thin up there."

"And, your point is?"

"Well, most Indians don't lose their hair, you know."

I wanted to say to him that most white people aren't as rude and insensitive as him, either. I said nothing.

A few days ago I wore what's left of my hair in braids, as I often do. A man I've known and admired for years, a high-profile gentleman of distinction downtown, hollers at me from 50 feet away, "Hey! Looks like you're an Indian today," while stroking imaginary braids of his own. "All you need now is a feather," he said, holding a finger up behind his head.

Would this same man walk up to Rocky, a good friend of mine who works at The Gazette, and say, "Hey, you're lookin' pretty black today. All you need now is a bale of cotton!"?

I don't think so.

Again, I held my tongue.

What happened to common courtesy? Is it uncommon? My mom taught me that if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything. But, being human and therefore very much imperfect, I also judge and assess friends and people that I meet. We all do. We don't have to SAY rude and hurtful things to each other, though.

I must admit, hard as I try not to, I've been guilty of that also.

I figure if it happens to me, it probably happens to a lot of people, in a lot of different ways, too.

A Northern Cheyenne woman I know needed work done on her 10-year-old car. She's a firefighter, and a night dispatcher for firefighting crews and equipment. She works hard, long, late hours for her money. Her car needed the points, plugs, wires, cap and rotor replaced. She tidies up her braids after working all night and takes her car to a garage on Broadwater in the morning.

After sizing up her and her car, they quote her a price of $440.

Instead, she calls an auto parts store, gets the parts she needs for $40, and uses valuable sleep time doing the tune-up herself.

I admire her, because she refused to Tonto herself.

You remember Tonto the slow, dumb, inarticulate subservient to the Lone Ranger? He was everything that the white man always wanted in an Indian. No matter what happened or what was thrown at him, he never rebelled and never questioned the Lone Ranger, always bowing to the bidding of the all-wise white hero.

My Northern Cheyenne friend refused to go there, and I'm proud of her.

And, there is a bright side to all of this. For every rude person that comes along, there seems to be about 50 total strangers who will just walk up and say something nice. I'll focus on them.

And maybe I'll just keep this old body after all, and like my friend, tune it up myself. I'll start by asking those with their rude and insensitive comments to get off my back, and think first before you say something that might be hurtful to someone. You're not as funny as you think you might be.

I won't be your Tonto any more.

This little gem was reprinted with the kind permission of the Billing Gazette from out of Montana. They can be reach at www.billingsgazette,com

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First Year College Students

Youth perspectives

By Lance Blacksmith

First-year college students gather from different communities to attend their first year of college in Chibougamou. Chibougamou College is primarily a French school with one English class, which is made up of native students. This is an exciting and very special step for the students. Some as young as 16 leave home to begin their journeys as adults. They will live on their own, either in apartments or in a residence home and attend school three times a week. The program they attend is a special program called transition. Jo-Ann Toulouse coordinates and helps the students adjust to college and their individual needs.

Lance: Jo-Ann Toulouse what is your role here at the college ?

I am the student advisor as well as teacher in the transition program at Chibougamou College.

My job consists of helping students become accustomed to college as well as helping students with specific difficulties in class or developing learning skills. As well, I do the day-to-day administration of the program.

The preparatory program is a brand-new program. It is only in its second year and is still a pilot project. We are hoping that eventually it will become permanent.

Lance: what is the transition program exactly?

It is a one-year session for students who are not sure of what they want to study yet,and those who just want to try college to see if it is for them. Some students want to increase their marks and others want to pick up additional credits.
This program is an opportunity that allow students to do those things. It also gives students from the north and from the communities to get accustomed to what college is. It helps to prepare for bigger colleges in the south or out west.

You are far from friends, far from family and far from your community. This is another part of college that can be difficult.

Having a transition program here, close to the communities allows students to go home easier and keep in touch with their friendsand families.

Lance: How many students are there?

Last year we started with ten students, nine from Waswanipi and one from Mistissini. This year we have twenty-three students. They are pretty evenly divided between Waswanipi, Mistissini and Nemaska and we have one student from Ouje-Bougoumou. There's also one from Eastmain. She will be stuying in French.

Lance: Do you teach Native students too?

Yes, I teach a class called "Success" actually. It is a class on study methods. No matter how many years we have been teaching students and students have been going to school, they figure they know how to study on their own.

When you get to college, it is different. No one tells you how to write this down exactly or what is the most important part. I teach students how to do this. I teach them how to make the most of reading and how to develop the skills they already have. It's a good course. I keep learning new things too.

Lance: How are all the students from different communities getting along?

Although those students come from different communities, they have experienced a lot of the same things, so there is no friction, other than between guys and girls They still usually hang out with people from their own community. Eventually, they make new friends and I think it is positive because they get the chance to see it is possible to meet new people from other communities and from the French sector. They can learn that friendships can be made anywhere --- just because we leave home doesn't mean that we are going to be alone.

Teachers find working with Cree students a little daunting because they don't talk a lot. In class, they listen and wait before answering. This year the group laughs a lot. We have some very bright students.

For the students who want to apply to the college for winter registration, applications have to be made by November 1st, and they have to be received at the service regionale. You can see your guidance counselor at your home school. The phone number here is (418) 748-7637. My name is Jo-Ann Toulouse and I'll mail one out to you. Please remember that post-secondary funding request must be in by October 1st. If you want to be financed for the semester, it is a good idea to make sure it gets in on time.

The students enrolled in the school this semester are:

From Nemaska :
Sharon Blackned
Melanie Jolly
Kristen Moar
Laura Wapachee

From Mistissini:
Shirley Coonishish
Cindy Neeposh
David Neeposh
Uriah Neeposh
Dale Petawabano
Crystale Petawabano

From Eastmain (in French):
Melanie Dixon- Gilpin

From Ouje-Bougoumou:
Jolina Dixon

From Waswanipi:
Caroline Blacksmith
Irene Blacksmith
Jesse Cooper
Gabriel Cooper
Christina Gull
Melissa Gull
Wayne Mathias
Arnold Neeposh

The teachers in this program are:

Jo-Ann Toulouse – **Success**

Lisa Shea - **English**

Jean Pierre Vincent - **Computers**

Michel Lavoie – **Physical Education**

Marie Zacherie – **Math**

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APPOINTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with pleasure that the Chief and Council announce the appointment of **Mr. John Henry Wapachee** to the position of **Director of Operations** for the Nemaska First Nation effective September 11, 2000.

Mr. Wapachee has a wide variety of experience both at a local as well as a regional level. His commitment to this community has been demonstrated with his quality work with the local Recreation Department as the Director. He has created and maintained a consistently high level of professionalism within the programs offered locally and was instrumental in the development and ongoing success of the Annual Cree Fitness Challenge.

Regionally, Mr. Wapachee is the Chief Electoral Officer for the Crees of James Bay for several years and has ensured appropriate and legally assured elections for Regional positions as well as those of the Cree Regional Authority/ Grand Council of the Crees (of Eeyou/Eenou Istchee)

His professional approach to organizational issues has been obvious with the ongoing regional athletic events and with his support and encouragement for professional training and certification of officials as well as his peers within other Recreational Departments.

Mr. Wapachee has provided volunteer efforts within the community by being part of the Local Education Committee and a strong proponent of the Wellness Program.

As a caring parent of 3 children and supporter of his wife Stella, John Henry is an energetic participant in local activities and community events.

The Chief and Council as well as the staff and management of the Nemaska First Nation welcomes and congratulates John Henry on this appointment.

Nemaska First Nation
Nemaska, Quebec

CLASSIFIEDS

100 Births

Welcome to my new baby nephew Lance Aaron Etapp-Hester, born on August 20 in Vald'or at 7 lbs. You are one sweet, adorable little boy. My heart has so much love for you little one, you'll never be without people who adore and love you. How happy you made your parents the day you were born. His parents are Angela and Floyd Hester (Waskaganish) Congratulations sister! From Rachel & Karl (Sending all our love and kisses across the miles through this e-mail thing)

101 Birthdays

Iwould like to say happy birthday to my cuz Irene Blacksmithon september 16 2000 and to my friend Melanie Neeposh on september 23they will turn 17 remember girl's don't party too much on your b-day and I wish you luck in school (chibougamau).last but not least Melissa Gull don't think i forgot you, I didn't she turned 18 on september 7 hope you enjoyed you b-dayp.s sorry i wasn't therefrom: friend always jo (lucky! lol!)

I would like to say Happy 17th Birthday to my cousin Irene Blacksmith. She will be celebrating her birthday on September 16, 2000. Well, have fun, don't party too much. I think about school. from: Your cousin Juanita.

I would like to wish Happy 17th birthday to my buddy Melanie Neeposh, She will be celebrating her birthday on September 23, 2000.Well have fun, don't party too much cause I know how much you like to party. Well Good luck in school and have fun on your birthday. From: friend always Juanita.

I would like to say happy birthday to my sister in law, Loretta Matahan on Sept. 4 2000. Happy Birthday and I love you as a sister. Hope your day was special as you are. Happy Birthday and many many more to come. Love from Iris Crowe

I would like to wish a very happy birthday to someone special in my life, my son Ernie Mataham. His birthday is on Sept. 29, 2000. I am glad to have a son like you. Youmake everyone laugh, you won't stop doing funny things to your aunts and Grandma. I'm grateful to have you in my life. Just by watching you grow into a fine young man makes me so proud and I couldn't do it without grandma and grampa's help. I love you my son with all my heart. Love always, Mommy Iris.

To our special son, Jarvis Matchus. Happy 2nd birthday on September 17, 2000. And many, many more to come. We love you Jarvee!! Love Always, (Mommy and Daddy) Karen and Ryan.

To Aaron Iserhoff of Chisasibi: Happy 2nd birthday on September 18, 2000. And many more to come. From: Karen, Ryan and Jarvis.

Happly Birthday to Matthew Duff on Septmeber 17, 2000. We love you! From Karen, Ryan and Jarvis. To: France-Julie Uniam

I would like to wish our sweet baby girl who'll be celebrating her 3rd birthday on September 10, 2000. Wishing you lots of happiness and laughter on your special day. I love you very much. From: Mom and Dad and your sisters and your big brother. J.R.U.

This goes out to my niece Patricia Angel, Happy 3rd Birthday to you on the 10th of September! I wish you all the best in your childhood years, may God keep you in his care always. With all my love, Your aunt Celina

To Marlene Ethrington (M.F, Ont.), Hello! I just want to wish you a Happpy Birthday on the 23rd of September. Have fun on your birthday as I'm sure you will.(EGOODE-HA?? You didn't forget to use that word did you? I'm just kiddin' here)Well anyway, take care! From Celina Wapachee, P.S I miss you all (You know who you are) Bve!

We would like to wish a belated birthday to a very special person in my life, my wonderful, caring, adorable, gentle and every wonderful name you can think of. My sister Shannon Trapper on Sept. 29 2000. We want you to know that we love you so much and have fun on your special day. With lots of love, Priscilla and Quindon (Waskaganish)

Happy Birthday to a wonderful Mother, Dorothy Shecapio, on Sept. 1st. With lots of Love and kisses and thanks for always being there for me. With love, your daughter Evelene Shecapio xoxoxo (in Waskaganish)

I would like to wish a belated birthday to my neice, Yvette Weistche, on Sept. 23. I love you very much. Love always, your auntie, Evelyne Shecapio xoxoxoxo (in Wask)

103 Anniversaries

I would like to wish Happy 16th anniversary to my parents Albert Blacksmith & Marlene G Blacksmith on September 8th.We thank you for your support, the love and the care that you guys have shown us

CLASSIFIEDS

throughout the years. Let the love grow more.Love always your daughter Juanita, your son Jari And Lee.xoxoxox

I would like to wish happy 16th anniversary to Paul & Stella Gull on September 8th.Good luck to all those coming years.From: Juanita

Happy belated 14th wedding anniversary to Beatrice and Emmette Mayappo on July 29, 2000. Wishing you many more anniversaries. From Iris and George Crowe

Happy belated 13th wedding anniversary to Wendy and John Moses on Aug. 4, 2000. Wishing you many more anniversaries and a lifetime of happiness. Also to Nancy and Charles Cox, happy belated 5th anniversary on August 4, 2000. From Iris and George Crowe

To my husband, George Crowe. I thank the Lord for blessing me with a wonderful husband to love and share my life with. Thank you for the wonderful things you do for me, and thank you for always being there for our children. I love you with all my heart. Happy belated 6th anniversary on August 6, 2000. Love always, your wife, Iris Crowe.

Happy 5th anniversary to Bert and Loretta Mataham on Oct. 20, 2000. Wishing you all the happiness and love throughout the coming years.From Iris and George Crowe.

To my parents Matthew & Emma Wapachee, Happy 24th Anniversary to the both of you on the 10th of September! I love you both very much, I just want to thank you for being such loving & supportive parents throughout the years! I can say alot more but I'm afraid it might take up the whole Nation magazine here. Well I hope you had a wonderful day. I Love You! From Celina

We would like to say happy Anniversary to the most important people in our lives, our parents Margaret and Ronnie Trapper on Sept. 12, 2000. Wishing you both all the happiness and lots of love throughout the years. We want to thank you for everything you have done for us, showing that you love us and taking care of us. We want you both to know that we love you so much. With love always, your children and grandchildren, Priscilla, Quindon, Amanda, Wyonna, Shannon, Ronnie (Jr) and (Baby) Judy-Rose xoxo

300 Personals

Hey there "PETE"! Comment t'a le vous? I hope you are well, my friend! It has been a while since we last met. I still have not given up on U yet. I love you and I don't give a **** what anyone says nor thinks. Not a day goes by when I don't think of you. I just close my eyes and I am with you. I need you in every way. I miss you in every way. I still love you in every way. You know what I mean Jellybean?! I passed thru town in August but I did not stay, some one said I missed you by a mile. I would have loved to see me thru those eyes of yours and that wicked grin which always gets me everytime... Please do not forget that I am there for you when U need me. You are in my daily prayers!!! All the Best and SOAR with the eagles, my friend. Ah yes, I still got this thing for you... Je t'aime! Ne oubliez pas!! Ashtam Nituapam Fidelio XOXO

500 Misc.

CREE TALENT Seeking for rapper/singer in James Bay area. Are you ready to take your music beyond the level of radios that play nothing but country and depressing love songs? If you like following artists: Limp Bizkit, Rage Against The Machines, Kid Rock, Papa Roach, Eminem, Dr dre, LL cool J, and Elwood. Apply by email at creetalent@netscape.net Tell us your opinion on today's music and your background. The emails will be screened and only the selected applicants will be notified to send their demos for a rehearsal!!!

I am subscriber to the "Nation". I have been trying so hard to find something and hoping you can help or you might know someone I can e-mail or send a letter to. My Grandparents, I was told came from Cree Nation of Kashechewan. I know that every Community has an Emblem or insignia that represents their Community; for example: Cree Nation of Wemindji, has a Canadian Goose within a circle next to a cloud. Would you have or know where I might be able to obtain a picture or maybe you could describe the emblem or insignia that represents Cree Nation of Kashechewan. I would like to do some beadwork and also make a flag to Honor my Grandparents. I am a dancer at the Powwows and this would mean alot to me. I hope you can help me Thank you for your time and I always look forward in receiving The Nation. Morning Star Wolf My e-mail is Morningstar@palermo.org

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